

Plan for Excavations at the Collier Lodge Site (12PR36)

Submitted to the

Indiana Department of Natural Resources,
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

by

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April 3, 2023

Archaeological Background

The Collier Lodge site (12PR36), also known as Baum's Bridge, is located on the southern border of Porter County, Indiana on the northern edge of the former Kankakee Marsh. The site is listed on the National and State Registers (Schurr and Rotman 2010). Previous investigations at the site (Schurr 2006; Schurr 2011a; Schurr 2011b; Schurr 2012; Schurr 2015a; Schurr and Chorek, in prep.) have recovered artifacts dating from the Early Archaic period (circa 11,000 B.C.) up until the recent past. Artifacts from most of the prehistoric and historic time periods of northwest Indiana are found at the site. However, most are found in mixed or non-feature contexts. Features discovered at the site date to the Upper Mississippian period (around A.D. 1400 – 1500) (Schurr 2015b) and throughout the historic nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The most abundant historic features date to the early nineteenth century when Euro-Americans were first entering the region and to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although these later periods are not technically considered “archaeological” according to Indiana State law and regulations, features from these relatively recent time periods can provide important information about human activities at the site during the time period just before and after the Kankakee Marsh was drained.

Because of the significance of the site, it is essential that it be managed and maintained to protect historic archaeological contexts. Accurately knowing the limits and distributions of archaeological deposits at the site is essential for site management.

Prior Archaeological Field Work at the Site

Prior excavations of the site (Figure 1) have largely focused on testing deposits at various places in the site and defining features immediately adjacent to the former Lodge building which was still standing at that time. Based on work at the site prior to 2011, the E 90 line on the site grid was considered to mark the eastern-most extent of features at the site (Schurr 2011b). However, one test unit from the 2011 season (Unit E 90 – 92 N 91-93, labelled A in the figure) contained a historic feature on the eastern end of the unit (Schurr 2012). In 2014, excavations were conducted to better define the eastern limit of archaeological features at the site. Four units placed during a short field season confirmed that historic features are relatively densely distributed west of the E 80 grid line (Schurr 2015a).

The Collier Lodge was built in 1898 and is referenced in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure. The Lodge itself was not eligible for the Register because it lacked historical integrity due to many alterations made throughout the 20th century. In spite of a metal roof that was installed to protect the structure, it continued to deteriorate to the point where it could not be renovated. It was demolished down to the foundation in early 2022. In 1919, a cinder block foundation was installed along the eastern and western sides of the Lodge and concrete steps were placed at the north and south sides of the Lodge. The steps and concrete blocks were not removed during the demolition to avoid disturbing the subsurface of the site.

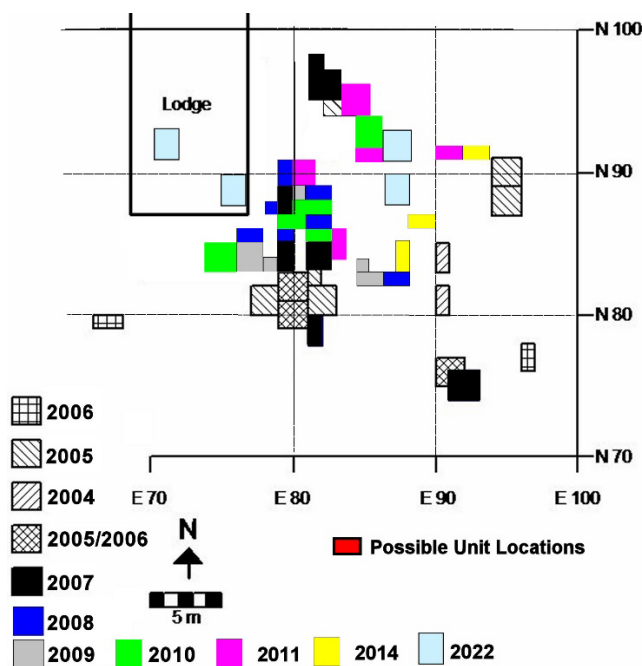


Figure 1. Prior Unit Locations with Inferred Eastern Limit of Features (dotted line). (Image by M. Schurr 2023)

Investigations conducted in 2022 had three goals: investigate the relationship of the remaining cinder block foundation to archaeological features; determine the western edge of Feature 25, a large, deep, complex feature interpreted as the in-filled remains of a 19th century cellar (Schurr 2006; 2011a; 2011b; 2012); and continue investigation of previously recorded Upper Mississippian features.

The excavation report from the 2022 season is still being prepared (Schurr and Chorek, in prep.). To summarize the results, a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey conducted within the area of the Lodge foundation did not detect any archaeological features. One unit placed inside the foundation found that at least part of the area had been extensively disturbed, probably during the twentieth century. A second unit placed to determine the depth of the concrete block foundation successfully documented the depth of the foundation, thanks in part to the helpful assistance of a groundhog. It also discovered a well-defined archaeological deposit that appears to represent a portion of Feature 25 within the Lodge foundation, but it did not uncover the western edge of the feature, indicating the feature extends further to west within the foundation. Feature 48, an Upper Mississippian pit previously documented in 2012 was completely excavated. A unit placed to investigate a possible Upper Mississippian feature to the south of Feature 48 uncovered a rock-filled roasting pit (defined as Feature 52). This was thought to be a prehistoric roasting pit, but it produced historic pottery in the last level excavated in 2022 (the feature was not completed). It is possible that the feature represents some kind of historic roasting pit or a prehistoric pit with a historic period intrusion. Further investigation is needed to understand this feature. The floor of the unit was

covered with plastic sheeting before it was backfilled so that the 2022 excavation floor can be relocated.

Goals of the 2023 Season

The 2023 season will have three goals:

1. Place one or more additional units within the Lodge foundation area to continue the search for the west edge of Feature 25.
2. Reopen the unit containing the roasting pit (Feature 52) to continue the investigation of this feature.
3. If crew size permits, reopen one of the uncompleted units from 2014 (Schurr 2015a) to investigate the distribution of features on the eastern edge of the site.

The information recovered by the excavations can be used for planning further preservation efforts at the site and to guide future research. Accurate locations for features will make it easier to preserve them, or if impacts are expected and cannot be avoided, the information could be used to create an appropriate mitigation plan. An inventory of features can also help us better understand how the site was used and would be useful if specific types of data must be recovered in the future.

The project will be conducted as a cooperative public archaeology project between the University of Notre Dame and the Kankakee Valley Historical Society (KVHS). The public archaeology project helps to educate the public about Indiana archaeology and helps the KVHS with its preservation and interpretation of the site.

Excavation Procedures

Investigation at the site will begin with the re-establishment of a metric site grid defined in 2003 by reference to several local benchmarks. Horizontal and vertical control of the excavations will be maintained by reference to the grid coordinate system.

Units will be placed as necessary to accomplish the season's goals. All excavation will be done by hand, using either shovels or trowels. The maximum size of any single excavation unit will be 2 meters square. The units will be excavated in either arbitrary levels with a maximum thickness of 10 cm, or in archaeological levels defined by changes in soil color, texture, or artifactual content. Archaeological levels with a thickness greater than 10 cm will be subdivided into arbitrary 10 cm levels to maintain additional stratigraphic control. Soil colors will be described using the Munsell system (1990 edition). All excavated soil will be screened through 1/4 inch hardware cloth, except for soils which appear to contain high concentrations of microbotanical or microfaunal remains. Soils from these contexts will be processed using flotation recovery techniques. Additional soil samples will also be water screened to test whether very small artifacts (such as seed beads or gunshot) are present. A water screening station will be established in the field so that samples can be processed

simultaneously with the excavations and a special tagging system will be employed to track water screen samples. Soil samples will also be collected from each archaeological stratum.

Each archaeological level and feature will be documented using the appropriate form and by scaled maps with a resolution of 0.5 cm. Artifacts with significant spatial relations to each other or to other features will be piece-plotted. All artifacts collected will be recorded in a field specimen log to maintain associations between specimens and their archaeological contexts. A Brick Record log will be used to record the locations and attributes if large brick fragments are encountered. Digital images (24.3 megapixels) will document the excavations and a record of all excavation photographs will be maintained. The completed field records and the photographs will be curated at the Archaeology Laboratory, University of Notre Dame. All artifacts collected during the excavation will be processed, and curated at the Archaeology Laboratory, University of Notre Dame along with their associated documentation where they will be used for research and teaching.

It is now estimated that a maximum total area of approximately 8 to 10 m² will be opened over the course of the project. At the conclusion of the excavation, all units will be backfilled and the site contours will be stabilized to prevent erosion. The methods used in the field investigation will meet or exceed the standards described in Department of Natural Resources 312 IAC 22.

The scientific investigation will be conducted between June 5 and June 23, 2023. The excavations will be conducted by volunteers from the KVHS and students from the University Notre Dame under the direction of Professor Mark R. Schurr. Schurr has extensive experience in Indiana archaeology and in human osteology and has directed multiple seasons of excavation at Collier Lodge. The site will be open to the public and visitors will be welcome to observe and learn about Indiana archaeology.

A report of the results of the excavation along with an updated SHAARD record will be submitted to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology within one year after the excavations are completed. Further reports describing laboratory analysis of cultural and biological materials from the site will be submitted as these analyses are conducted. It is anticipated that public talks and perhaps conference presentation describing the investigations will also be given after the field season.

Statement on Human Burials

McAllister (1932) reported that several burials were found in the “immediate vicinity” of the site prior to 1931. Their cultural affiliation is unknown but it is assumed they were prehistoric. Local oral history and a newspaper story from 1919 (The Stroller 1919) indicates that a human burial with freshwater pearl (or perhaps shell) beads was found under the Lodge. Two isolated human elements (a foot bone and a finger bone) were identified while examining faunal remains collected in 2008 and 2009. They came from two different, but adjacent, excavation units. One came from the second level of the topsoil while the other came from Feature 25, the large pit interpreted as the

filled-in cellar of an early 19th century dwelling. The remains are culturally unaffiliated because they are fragments from non-grave contexts and could date to any time period. As a Native American burial was apparently found in the vicinity of the Lodge building (above), they may be Native American. However, given the extensive use of the site over the last 200 years, Euro-American burials or skeletal elements cannot be ruled out.

The collection of human bone is not a goal of the project and all reasonable attempts will be made to avoid disturbing human burials or collecting isolated human bones. Because human bones were previously found commingled with historic faunal remains, faunal remains found during excavation will be scanned at least twice a day by the P.I. If human bone is accidentally encountered during excavation, all work in the excavation unit containing the bone will be immediately halted, and the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology will be notified within two working days. Any human remains encountered will be treated in accordance with IC 14-21-1 and 312 IAC 22. If a single isolated element is found, we propose continuing work in the excavation unit. If a second element is found in the same unit, the DHPA will once again be contacted and work in that unit would end. If any isolated elements are found, we would like to rebury the bone when the unit is backfilled. The landowners of each site have also requested that any burials or human bones that are accidentally encountered be preserved. Compliance with Federal NAGPRA regulations will be the responsibility of the University of Notre Dame

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